



**Testimony in Support of SB 275 “Labor and Employment – Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program – Establishment (Time to Care Act of 2022)”**

**Submitted to the Senate Finance Committee**

**February 10, 2022**

My name is Dasha Johnson, I live in Maryland, and I am the Operations Manager at Well-Paid Maids, a living-wage home cleaning company with approximately 20 employees, most of whom live in Maryland. In my job, I hire, train, and manage all of our wonderful employees. I am very aware of what makes our employees succeed at work and in life and what holds them back. I am also very aware of what helps the business grow and what creates obstacles to our growth. That is why I am here to support SB 275 which would address the dire need for paid family and medical leave.

I am confident that having a state public program makes our business stronger and be better for our employees. Originally, our company provided private short term disability insurance, which had a very difficult process for claims approval, did not cover many types of leave, and was costly. Since moving to DC’s public Paid Family and Medical Leave program, our company is now able to provide better coverage at a third of the cost. A Maryland paid family and medical leave program would give businesses like ours the same great coverage through a public program and bring the cost to all businesses down, allowing them to invest more in growth and other employee benefits.

Not only do I believe that businesses around the state can afford this, I believe that they will benefit greatly from the provision of statewide paid leave. The small additional payroll tax required for a statewide paid leave program would be a negligible additional cost that business could easily bear. Given that we could afford it with our already generous benefits package, I believe that other businesses around the state could easily afford it as well.

We have been around since 2017 and were recently voted Best Maid Service in the Washington City Paper’s Best of DC competition. We serve Maryland, DC, and Virginia, all our employees make at least \$20 per hour, and everyone receives a full benefits package including 22 paid days off per year, health, dental, and vision insurance, and employer-paid commuting costs.

Our company has reaped tremendous gains by offering the benefits I mentioned. My employees are happy, hardworking, and dependable because our benefits package faces the reality of every day life – people get sick, get injured and need vacations. By accommodating these facts of life with benefits that recognize them, our employees know that we have their back. In turn, they offer better service to our customers and stay with the firm longer than I believe they otherwise would.

To summarize, a strong paid family and medical leave program cut our small business’s expenses, increased our revenue, and allowed us to invest more in growth so that we can create more living-wage jobs in our community. Beyond being the right thing to do, these measures are crucial to helping small businesses like ours recover from the pandemic and I do hope that you will support SB 275.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you so much again for your time.